THE HOME CIRCLE

Sonnet.*

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus, rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

—William Wordsworth.

Lines Writen in Early Spring.*

I heard a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sat reclined
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran,
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts in that sweet bower
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played—
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion that they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air,
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

From heaven if this belief be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

—William Wadsworth.

The Least of His Troubles.

Senator Hawley, of Connecticut, was born in Stewartsville, North Carolina. A time ago he went down to see his birthplace and when he returned told his friends about the trip.

"Why don't you buy the old place, Joe?" he was asked.

"What for?"

"Why, so you can leave it to posterity."

"Posterity?" growled Senator Hawley. "Do you think I am troubled by posterity? They will all be here when I'm dead."—Saturday Evening Post.

*Nos. 149 and 150 of our series of the World's Best Poems, selected especially for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor. In this series selections from the following authors have already appeared: Burns, Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Byron, Goldsmith, Holmes, Kipling, Lanier, Longfellow, Lowell, Markham, Macaulay, Milton, Moore, Poe, Pope Tennyson, Fimrod, Riley, Ryan, Scott, Shakespeare, Shelley, and others.

READING ALOUD IN THE HOME.

A Good Suggestion for the Fall and Winter Season.

I should like to add here a word, at this opening of the reading season, about home reading and its benefits to children. The habit of reading aloud is a delightful feature in the life of some families, and may be made a source of profit as well as pleasure to children. In too many American homes the absence of the older boys and girls in the evening is plainly noticeable; they find their recreation elsewhere. As a rule this recreation is wholesome, but it is too often sought outside the home where it ought to be provided. It is one of the secrets of keeping companionship fresh and close that it must be made to include pleasure as well as work. The wife who desires to keep in touch with her husband must have a share in his recreations; and the mother who wishes to hold her children fast as they grow older must play as well as work with them. The practice of reading aloud is one of the ways of keeping boys and girls of active, inquiring minds at home.

If home reading is to be effective it must, first of all, be interesting; the books read must be chosen with reference to the children's tastes and interests. Follow the line of least resistance by going where they want to go, but select the guides yourself. If they want adventure give them adventure, but give them the best; accept their subjects, but use your maturer knowledge in choosing the writers who deal with those subjects. One evening a week devoted to reading aloud thoroughly interesting stories, travels, histories, biographies, popular books of science, would add immensely to the attractiveness of many homes and prove a potent influence to protect older children from the fascination of recreations less wholesome and stimulating.

Very few fathers and mothers understand the educational value of good books in the home. They fail to realize how much familiarity with the best writing has to do with teaching a child to use his own language with freedom and accuracy. Children, like their elders, frequently abuse the language. Their vocabularies are limited; they are often ungrammatical through carelessness; and they drop into slang because they do not command adequate use of words. President Eliot of Harvard University, once said that if there be any single test of a man's education it is his ability to use his own language correctly and with freedom. Children abroad, who have any educational opportunities, are very carefully trained in the use of language. The training is very largely a matter of home influence. The schools can do something, but they cannot do much if the influence of the family is constantly exerted in the wrong direction. Children who are in the habit of hearing slovenly speech form a slovenly habit of speaking themselves; and teachers find it very difficult to undo the unfortunate influence of the home. In all the professions, in correspondence of every kind, and in social life, the proper and free use of one's language is of the very highest importance, and yet it is one of the things about which the great majority of parents are most indifferent. This indifference is due to the fact that most fathers and mothers do not understand the force of their own examples. They do not realize that their children learn far more from them in hourly intercourse than they learn in the few hours during which they are committed to the teacher's care. To counteract this influence, the habitual reading of good books by parents and children alike is of prime importance.—Hamilton. W. Mabie, in Ladies' Home Journal.

An Interesting Problem.

"How old is Ann?" is a question that is agitating many people in all sections of the country. The Dayton, Ohio, Evening Herald says the problem is a simple one, yet the whole country is now working on it and women's clubs promise to take it up. Here is the problem as printed in the Dayton paper:

"Mary is 24 years old. Mary is twice as old as Ann was when Mary was as old as Ann is now. How old is Ann?"

Commenting on the problem, the Herald says:

"Simple, isn't it? Just as easy as rolling off a log. Of course, you will say Ann is 12. Then you will think it over a while and discover that Ann is 16. Then you will kick yourself for your stupidity and confess that the girls are the same age. A moment later a great light will dawn and you will see clearly that Ann is 18. But before you go to bed your mind will still be full of uncertainties, and you will proceed to work out the problem by algebra. The result of the effort will be that you will find that Ann is 16.97 years old. And then you go to guessing."

The problem, it is said, first came up at Harvard, where football practice was suspended while it was being worked out. Then the New York papers took it up. To-day the papers are crowded with solutions, all different. From New York the fever spread. Even Philadelphia awoke, while in Chicago it has gone so far that the Tribune has a long editorial on the subject.

In some instances it is said that each members of a family has carefully worked out the problem and all come to different conclusions. As an illustration of the interest taken in the problem and the different solutions presented we note that in the Dayton Herald's issue of the 20th Archie Mumma finds that Ann is 18 years of age; William Stuck is sure she is 16; William Donaldson asserts "without defalcation" that Ann is a girl of 12; while a Milwaukee correspondent is absolutely convinced that one can prove the young woman any age he pleases. The question therefore, "How old is Ann?" is yet an open one and the problem may come in good to furnish means of amusement for those who have nothing to do during the long winter evenings. In fact, How old is Ann?—Charlotte Chronicle.

Got Even With Kipling.

Cecil Rhodes, the late South African magnate, had a bone to pick with Rudyard Kipling, the poet, and succeeded in doing it to his complete satisfaction. This is how the story is told in the London clubs:

Kipling and Rhodes were fellow-passengers on a Cape Railway train bound toward Kimberley. Up to the moment of departure from Cape Town Rhodes had been busy sending dispatches, and it fell to the lot of the poet to book their seats and berths. The author is a man of boyish build; the empire-builder was ponderous, and had a decided aversion to sleeping in a top berth. Knowing this, the poet determined to have fun at the expense of the man of destiny. When that night the ex-Premier found that he had been assigned to an upper berth his rage was great. He pleaded with the agile Kipling to exchange with him; but the poet, with a sardonic smile, assured Rhodes that he could not think of exalting himself above so mighty an imperialist, and so the bulky statesman had to climb laboriously to bed.

After midnight the train stopped at a small station on the desolate karoo, and the wife of a colonial officer got aboard. When she discovered that, notwithstanding her telegram, no reservation had been made for her, she lifted up her voice in loud protest. The commotion awakened Rhodes, who thrust his head out between the curtains and demanded to know the cause of the disturbance.

"I am the wife of Colonel ——," the lady exclaimed, "and although I wired for a berth, none has been saved for me!"

"That's all right," thundered the Colossus; "my little boy is occupying the berth just under mine; turn in there with him."

The lady was appeased, and proceeded to take advantage of the offer. Presently there was an insurrection in the lower berth.

"Now don't cry and make a fuss," the lady was heard to say; "your father told me I might sleep here."

"Madam," gasped the author of "The Jungle Book," "do you—do you know who I am?"

"You are the little son of the gentleman in the upper berth, are you not?" faltered the now startled woman, peering into the dark compartment.

"Nothing of the sort," roared the poet; "I am Mr. Rudyard—"

Before he could confess further the frightened woman fled to another car. The upper berth shook with convulsive appreciation as the poet, with a mingled vocabulary of several tongues, berated the South African statesman.

"Ring off on the cuss-words, and swear," exclaimed Rhodes from his altitude of mirth, "and give us something about a rag and a bone and a hank of hair!"

But with picturesque wrath Kipling stuck to his impromptu program.—Woman's Home Companion.